

28th October 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians, copied to NCs,

The Autumn / Fall Break is going well. Several groups have gone hiking and camping in the region for different periods. Some students have been on cycling tours in and beyond Freiburg. Students were given permission to go to the historic city centre for the first time this Semester on Sunday when all shops are closed and the city centre relatively sparsely populated. I spent a couple of hours cycling around the city centre on the Sunday afternoon and in every instance when I saw students, they were enjoying themselves in the agreed ways - ways that carry minimal risk of Covid-19 infection. Members of staff also have offered guided tours. On Tuesday as well as this afternoon, when the weather has been dry, we have repeated the invitation for students to visit the city centre. So that everyone is clear: we require students to cycle or walk to the city, there is a regulatory requirement for everyone in the city centre to be masked, students are required to stay outdoors except if visiting a Church (the Münster is at the heart of the city), the synagogue or mosque, or a Museum. These places all are very quiet and have strict infection-control measures.

As I have said in a previous letter, our objective is not that students lead lives of zero covid-19 risk – we presume they would not be doing so at home. Our objective is to keep the risks as low as possible by avoiding as best as we can (in Covid-19 terms) medium to high risk activities. We also try to give our students the possibility of decompression from campus life for as long as we can, especially while the Covid-19 infection rate continues to climb, steeply, in most parts of Europe and here in Freiburg.

There is speculation whether (and if yes, then when) the Authorities will re-impose some form of lockdown. There is speculation whether, if there is a lockdown, at least secondary schools will be required to close.

For the reassurance of parents and guardians, the following is the position at UWC Robert Bosch College (RBC) *if secondary schools are required to close*:

- a) RBC will continue to remain open as a boarding establishment. Permission was granted for this for the duration of the lockdown in March/April/May last Semester and there is no reason why the principle would change: people are allowed to stay at their registered address in Germany and all our students (and many of our staff) have RBC as their registered address. If in the most unlikely situation that we are forced by circumstance also to close the Boarding establishment, we will work closely with our own networks and with the German National Committee so that every student who needs a home will have one.
- b) Students will not be *required* to remain staying on campus: individual students may stay on campus or they may return home (or to a friend's home). This is a matter for you their Parents and Guardians, and them. Our experience of the lockdown last Semester was that most students voluntarily chose to stay on campus.
- c) After a pause of a few days to allow for teachers and 1st year students to transition, classes then will continue on-line. During the lockdown last Semester, in addition to the on-line classes, we were impressed and pleased at how many informal study and tutoring groups emerged. I was struck by the amount of personal tutoring also

provided (in-person) by the on-campus staff, and (on-line) by the staff resident off-campus.

- d) On-line classes will be available to students both on-campus and those who have returned home or to a home. On-line classes will not continue once the school is allowed to recommence classroom teaching. The reason for this is simple: RBC needs to preserve the strength and longer-term capacity of its staff.

Once schools are allowed to open, those students who have gone home will be allowed to return. In May, the Health Authorities in Freiburg required all returning students to undertake a quarantine. I do not know what quarantine or other measures the Authorities will require of returning students this time – if schools are required to close and then are allowed to re-open. If a quarantine is required, I need to record that RBC is full and lacks the spare capacity to quarantine returning students on campus without major disruption for those who remained on campus. Most probably, if a quarantine is required of returning students, this would need to be fulfilled in a local hotel and at the cost of the parents and guardians.

I think we all wish that circumstances were different. Now we hope that the spread of Covid-19 can be held at least sufficiently in check so that medical facilities and most importantly the staff at medical facilities are not overwhelmed by Covid-19 infections. If other measures do not achieve that check in the increase of infections, then from a school perspective we accept the necessity of a lockdown and the closure of secondary schools. At the same time, we remember that the nature of the community that develops during periods of adversity like this can be special. This is what we experienced during the lockdown last Semester.

Most importantly, please be assured: the RBC Board and Staff and our service partners take our responsibilities seriously. You already have shown courage in sending your children here, for half our parents and guardians already in knowledge of the Covid-19 pandemic. We honour your courage. In that spirit we will look after your children, our students, to the best of our ability and for as long as it takes.

With best wishes,



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